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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

March 9, 2007

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PRESS RELEASE

**NOTORIOUS QUEENS GANG LEADER KENNETH "SUPREME" McGRIFF
SENTENCED TO LIFE IMPRISONMENT FOR RACKETEERING, DOUBLE MURDER-FOR-HIRE
HOMICIDES, NARCOTICS TRAFFICKING, AND LAUNDERING DRUG PROCEEDS**

Roslynn R. Mauskopf, United States Attorney for the Eastern District of New York, announced that drug kingpin KENNETH "Supreme" McGRIFF was sentenced to life imprisonment without the possibility for parole for his February 1, 2007, conviction for racketeering, two murder-for-hire homicides, narcotics trafficking, and engaging in illegal financial transactions with drug money. Following capital sentencing proceedings that began on February 6, 2007, the jury was unable to reach a unanimous verdict regarding the death penalty. As a result, McGRIFF faced a mandatory sentence of life imprisonment. Today's sentencing was held before United States District Judge Frederic Block, at the U.S. Courthouse in Brooklyn, New York.

In the early 1980s, McGRIFF founded a gang that he named after himself, "The Supreme Team," based in the Jamaica section of Queens, New York. Under McGRIFF's leadership, the gang's numbers swelled to the hundreds and came to control the crack-cocaine trade in the Baisley Park Houses, the neighborhood where McGriff was raised. At its 1987 peak, the Supreme Team's drug receipts from its street-level operation exceeded \$200,000 a day, and the gang regularly committed acts of violence to maintain its stronghold on the area's drug trade.

In 1987, McGRIFF was arrested following a joint state and federal investigation, and in 1989 pled guilty to engaging in a continuing criminal enterprise. He was sentenced to 12 years' incarceration. McGRIFF was released from prison on parole in early 1994 after serving approximately seven years of his sentence. He was sent back to prison on parole violations by yearend, and served another 2 1/2 years' incarceration before being released in 1997. McGRIFF promptly assembled a new team of gang associates, and returned to a life of crime on an even grander scale.

At the most recent trial, which began in federal court in Brooklyn on January 9,

2007, the government's evidence proved that between 1997 and 2002, McGRIFF established a sprawling and violent criminal organization and again became involved in a wide variety of criminal conduct, including racketeering, drug trafficking, illegal use of firearms, homicide, and money laundering. This time, McGRIFF's narcotics trafficking reached out from New York into Maryland and North Carolina, and, in contrast to the Supreme Team's street-level crack cocaine operations, McGRIFF's new enterprise trafficked in wholesale quantities of heroin and cocaine.

McGRIFF's new enterprise used deadly violence against its rivals. For example, the government's evidence established that McGRIFF paid a team of hitmen based in Harlem, New York, to shoot and murder aspiring rap artist Eric Smith, also known as "E. Money Bags," in Queens, New York, on July 16, 2001, in retaliation for Smith's suspected involvement in a shoot-out that resulted in the death of a McGRIFF associate, Colbert Johnson, also known as "Black Just," eighteen months earlier. The hitmen shot Smith 11 times, at point-blank range, as he sat in his parked truck attending a neighborhood barbeque. The government also proved that on October 21, 2001, McGRIFF's hired killers gunned down and murdered Troy Singleton, a close associate of Smith, to prevent him from retaliating against McGRIFF. The shooters fired multiple shots at close range, striking Singleton in the head, and continued to fire another seven shots as he lay wounded on the ground.

"The defendant was one of the most dangerous and feared narcotics traffickers in New York," stated United States Attorney **Mauskopf**. "He devoted the better part of two decades to gangs, drug trafficking, and violence, treating his prior sentences as mere interruptions in his pursuit of a life of crime. We are gratified that McGRIFF will now spend the rest of his life behind bars." Ms. **Mauskopf** commended the extraordinary efforts of the Internal Revenue Service, the New York City Police Department, the Federal Bureau of Investigation, the Drug Enforcement Administration, and the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms & Explosives for their exhaustive investigation, and thanked the Queens County District Attorney's Office and the Police Department of Baltimore County, Maryland, for their assistance.

The government's case was prosecuted by Assistant United States Attorneys Carolyn Pokorny, Jeffrey Rabkin, and Jason Jones.

The Defendant:

KENNETH McGriff, also known as "Supreme," "Preme," "Rick Coleman," "Kevin Long," "John Simms," and "Lee Tuten"

DOB: 9/19/59